

Quick Reference Guide: Professional Dress

Dress for Success - Appearance Matters!

The Career Centers recommends a **conservative, professional approach to dress for an interview**. While you might not agree with all of the following suggestions, they could be factors for being screened out of a job interview due to appearance, depending on the organization, your career field, and the perspective of the person interviewing you. When in doubt, be conservative, be professional, and be aware that you are selling a total package.

Job Interview Attire:

- Suit or Skirt Suit – solid, dark or neutral colors – no stripes or bright prints or colors
 - Suit Jacket and pants/skirt should be matching colors
 - Properly fitted means your pant should touch the top of your shoe and a skirt length no more than one inch above the knee
 - Light colors can be worn underneath - white, cream & light blue are all good choices

- More specifically:
 - Suit jackets should be buttoned when standing and unbuttoned to sit
 - Single-breasted suits are recommended over double-breasted
 - Opt for conservative neck tie - avoid bright colors or loud patterns and be sure the tie falls to the middle of your belt
 - A good leather belt that matches shoe color shows your attention to detail
 - Choose a long-sleeve shirt or a coordinating dress blouse - no plunging necklines, no sleeveless tops
 - Consider an undershirt

- Dark dress shoes
 - Polished and buffed
 - Dark dress socks (absolutely No gym socks) or neutral colored nylons (No runs)
 - Don't wear wedges, platform heels, 4-5-inch stilettos or open toe shoes

- Hair, Nails & Accessorizing
 - If your hair past shoulder length have it pulled away from your face
 - Facial hair should be well groomed and avoid long side burns
 - Nails should be trimmed or have clear or conservatively color polish (No chipped polish)
 - Opt for more natural looking make-up
 - Accessorize simply - minimal conservative classic jewelry
 - Nothing overly flashy, dangling, or layering

In general if you feel you should ask, the professional suggestion is probably no.



Additional Recommendations:

- Dress watch
- Carry a nice pen (speaks volumes about your understanding of quality)
- Have or borrow a briefcase or good quality bag
 - Avoid carrying a purse into an interview
 - Turn off your cell phone
- Fresh breath
- Freshly bathed / showered
 - No body odor
 - No cigarette smoke – it lingers
- Pressed clothing, free of lint, pet hair, etc.



Potential Interview Killers:

- Heavy cologne/perfume
- Visible tattoos – align to company culture and style
- Visible body piercing(s) – align to company culture and style
- Unkempt hairstyle
- Overstuffed briefcase, bag, or pockets
- Scuffed shoes
- Loose or missing buttons
- Clothing that is wrinkled, too tight, or too big

More Business, Than Casual

Business Casual is great for conferences, work-related social events, travel, and even some work environments, business casual is intended to be a little less formal than business professional attire, but still projects the idea you're ready to do business.

Acceptable Attire:

- Sport coat or blazer creates a pulled-together look (and eliminates the need for a tie!)
- Dress pants such as slacks, wrinkle-free khaki trousers, wool flannel, or linen with a button-down shirt (tie optional), cotton blouses or cardigan sets
- Pant suits are considered business casual in many work environments
- Skirts and dresses should be knee length when standing and thighs covered while seated
- Oxfords, loafers, flats and closed toed heels that are comfortable.
- Knee highs or trouser socks with trousers
- Accessories should add polish, but don't overdo it

Unacceptable Attire:

- Ripped jeans, shorts, sun dresses
- Leggings, stretch pants, or other form fitting pants
- Sweat pants, spandex, or workout attire
- Athletic shoes, hiking boots, sandals, or flip flops
- Flannel shirts or T-shirts
- Hats / caps

